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ABSTRACT

The teaching guide and the videotape it complements are designed to help students define and discuss civic responsibilities. The thirty-two minute videotape takes a case-study approach toward understanding civic responsibility. The video identifies some of the attitudes and feelings people have towards problems in American society and then gives examples of ways to address concerns in the community. It shows five positive examples of people participating in American democracy. Each of the five stories shows how one individual identified a problem in his or her community, decided to address the problem, and by using his or her own resources, successfully made an impact on the community and even the country. The teacher's guide is composed of four activities, each of which emphasizes a different aspect of civic responsibility. The activities are: (1) "What is Civic Responsibility?" (2) "Social Movements in the United States"; (3) "Citizen Stories"; and (4) "Community Service." The activities involve either class discussions or small-group work. Student handouts are provided. The active learning approach encourages students to go beyond recognition or knowledge of facts to begin analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating the issues and concepts being studied. (LH)

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CITIZEN STORIES

Democracy and Responsibility in American Life

Guide for the Instructor

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CITIZEN STORIES

Democracy and Responsibility in American Life

Guide for the Instructor

Written by Stephanie Caywood, Charles R. Sass, and David R. Zack

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Close Up Foundation

To the Instructor

The United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, Supreme Court decisions, and acts of Congress have, over the years, granted numerous rights to Americans. Yet nowhere are the *responsibilities* of citizenship described. Many people wonder: what is civic responsibility? Some believe that responsibilities include paying taxes, serving on a jury, or serving in the military in times of war. Others claim that to be a responsible citizen, people should make a difference in their community by volunteering at soup kitchens or leading campaigns to save the environment. The Close Up Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution developed this videotape to help students comprehend what civic responsibility means to them and how they can become active participants in American civic life.

About the Video

"Citizen Stories: Democracy and Responsibility in American Life" is a thirty-two minute videotape that takes a case-study approach toward understanding civic responsibility. The video identifies some of the attitudes and feelings people have towards problems in American society and then gives examples of ways to address concerns in the community. "Citizen Stories" shows five positive examples of people participating in our democracy:

- Trevor Ferrell—a 17-year-old high school student who helps homeless people in Philadelphia.
- Cindy Rank—a part-time health care worker who devotes time to environmental issues.
- Lilia Velasquez—an attorney who does pro bono work for people seeking citizenship in the United States.
- William Warner Johnson—a Washington, D.C., police officer who started a student-run shopping mall in a local high school.
- Ralph Nader—a lawyer and nationally recognized consumer advocate.

Each of the five stories shows how one individual identified a problem in his or her community, decided to address this problem, and by using his or her own resources, successfully made an impact on the community and even the nation.

About the Guide

This guide is designed to help your students define and discuss civic responsibilities. The guide is composed of four activities, each of which emphasizes a different aspect of civic responsibility. The activities are as follows:

Activity 1: What Is Civic Responsibility?

Activity 2: Social Movements in United States History

Activity 3: Citizen Stories

Activity 4: Community Service

The guide also provides you with additional suggestions for making this a successful and enjoyable learning experience. The teaching strategies and activities contained in the guide can be used in a variety of ways. Feel free to develop or adapt the activities to suit your teaching style, the needs of your students, and the amount of time you have to cover each topic.

Goals

The goals of this videotape and instructor's guide are to:

1. Help students understand what constitutes civic responsibility.
2. Examine positive examples of responsible citizenship in United States history as well as in present-day society.
3. Identify and evaluate social movements throughout United States history.
4. Increase student awareness of how to become responsible citizens.

Student Activities

The activities are designed to provide a variety of educational experiences for your students. Rather than following a traditional lecture format, all of the activities involve class discussions or small group work. This active learning approach encourages students to go beyond mere recognition or knowledge of the facts to begin analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating the issues and concepts under study.

Tips on Leading Effective Class Discussions

All of the activities in this guide involve class discussion. Adhering to the following procedures will increase the effectiveness of your discussions.

• Structure class discussions so that they involve the entire class; avoid creating a dialogue between the teacher and a few students. Make a special point of encouraging students to interact directly with each other rather than with you.

• Sequence your questions so that more students can participate. Use Bloom's Taxonomy to help you develop your questions. Sequencing is extremely important because it develops a concept or idea from rudimentary to more sophisticated.

• Incorporate "wait time" into your discussion periods. You should wait for all students to respond to a question; if students cannot respond successfully, rephrase the question and try again.

Tips on Conducting Small Group Work

Small group work is an important part of the activities in this guide. Stress the need for students to listen, to solicit opinions from all group members, to focus on issues rather than on personalities, to focus on the assigned topic and task, to resolve conflicts, to move the discussion along, and to probe the responses of other students. Indicate to students that they should work to guarantee that everyone in their group participates. After the activity, include an examination of group participation so students understand that their ability to work together is as important as the conclusions they reach.

Activity 1
What Is Civic Responsibility?

Objectives

After completing this activity, students should be able to:

1. List actions common to civic responsibility in a democracy.
2. Discuss what constitutes civic responsibility.
3. Understand that people have differing attitudes about their roles as citizens.

Procedure

1. Before students view the tape, write the following statement on the board:

A person is a responsible citizen when he or she _____ .

Then, in a brainstorming session, ask your students to respond with short, quick answers. One to four words will do. Write their responses on the board as you proceed. When you have compiled a list of fifteen to twenty answers, spend a few minutes reviewing the items. Responses will probably range from simple answers such as "votes" or "pays taxes" to more complex actions like "becomes a foster parent" or "feeds the homeless." Point out the simple to complex range of activities. Remind students that the range of opinions around the nation would probably be no different from the range of opinions in their class because people hold many different opinions about what constitutes civic responsibility.

2. Next, distribute copies of **Student Handout 1: Civic Responsibilities.** Give students ten or fifteen minutes to finish the handout, and then tally their rankings on the board by writing down the numbers 1 through 12 in columns and then going through the list asking: "How many of you ranked number one first? How many ranked it second?" and so forth. If students are reluctant to raise their hands, you might want to tally the votes yourself and simply post the results. When the rankings are tallied, average the scores and discuss the results. Are students surprised by any of the final rankings? Was it difficult for them to assign a ranking to the items? Encourage students to express opinions about individual items and tell why they think any of the items should be ranked higher or lower. Remind them that this list is by no means complete, but is merely a sampling of possible activities that could be considered civic responsibilities.

3. Conclude by pointing out how the diversity of American opinions and attitudes about civic responsibility has been demonstrated in this activity. Also emphasize that apathy is no excuse for shirking civic responsibility. Next, tell students that they are going to see a videotape of several people who became active citizens because they were not satisfied with what was happening around them.

Additional Suggestions

1. Have students brainstorm a list of ten to fifteen needs or concerns within their community. List their responses in a column on the board. Next, write "individual," "community group," "local or state government," and "federal government" in a row across the top of the board. Go through each concern, and poll the students as to which group is primarily responsible for each community concern. Tally student responses as you go. Once you have gone through the list of concerns, examine the results and discuss who is responsible for various community needs. Ask students how they determined who is responsible. Did they have a difficult time assigning one responsible party to each community concern? What kind of effect does an overlap of "who's responsible" have on public policies that address community needs?

2. Have students write a scenario describing an ideal citizen. Their description should be as realistic as possible. Have students present their scenarios to the rest of the class. After all students have made presentations, ask them to choose which story described the best "ideal citizen."

3. Divide students into groups of five or six. Have each group role play the framers of the Constitution. Have them draft a "Bill of Responsibilities" in which they list no more than ten responsibilities for U.S. citizens. After the groups have completed their lists, have one person from each group present their bill. After each group has made its presentation, compare the bills. Ask students what types of responsibilities each included. Should such a "Bill of Responsibilities" be added to the Constitution? Why or why not?

Activity 2
Social Movements in United States History

Objectives

After completing this activity, students should be able to:

1. Identify and discuss social movements in United States history.
2. Understand and evaluate the effects of social movements on history and present-day society.

Procedure

Note: This activity should be completed before students view the videotape.

1. Divide students into groups of five or six. Have each group choose a social movement in the United States in which citizens worked together to change American society. Students can research their own topics or choose one of the following:

Abolitionist movement
Progressive movement
Civil rights movement
Environmental movement
Temperance movement
Women's suffrage movement
Consumer movement

Give each student a copy of **Student Handout 2: Social Movements in United States History.** These questions will help focus the students in their research.

2. After the research is complete, have each group prepare a short presentation describing their chosen social movement and the effect it had on society at that time and/or the effect it has on society today. Have each group make its presentation to the rest of the class.

Additional Suggestions

1. Have students make a timeline of social movements in the United States. Students should include details of the events that led to the movement, how the movement affected society at the time it occurred, and the effect it has on society today.

2. Assign each student a particular social movement in United States history. Have each student conduct research to find a person who is not well known but made great contributions to the movement. Each student should write a paper (three to five pages in length) describing this person, his or her contribution, why he or she got involved, and any obstacles that he or she met. You may ask several students to make an oral presentation to the rest of the class.

3. Have students predict the next major social movement in the United States. They should write a letter to the editor of the school newspaper describing the movement, its cause, the people involved, any opposition to the movement, and the effect that this movement will have on society.

Activity 3
Citizen Stories

Objectives

After completing this activity, students should be able to:

1. Summarize each of the citizen stories in the videotape.
2. Explain how the main characters in each story would describe what it means to be a responsible citizen.
3. Describe what responsible citizenship means to them.

Procedure

1. Before viewing the videotape, write the following quotation from the tape's introduction on the board:

Most of us are conscious of our rights, but when it comes to our responsibilities, many of us tend to leave that to others.

Discuss this statement with your students. What does it mean? What are our rights as citizens? What are our responsibilities?

2. Explain to students that they are about to watch a videotape that describes how five people from varying backgrounds view their responsibilities as citizens. Distribute **Student Handout 3: Viewing Guide** and review it with the class, making sure that students realize they are to answer the questions on the handout while they are watching the tape. The purpose of the viewing guide is to maintain students' attention during the tape and to give them the opportunity to think about how the concept of civic responsibilities differs among people. Point out to students that they should pay careful attention to the opening and closing segments of the tape; these segments will be discussed—along with the questions in the viewing guide—after the tape is over.

3. You have the option of showing the tape several ways. You may stop the tape when each of the stories is over to allow students time to complete each segment of the viewing guide individually. Or you may let the students view the tape all the way through and then review the viewing guide and discussion questions in steps four and five. Another option is to stop the tape after each question in the viewing guide has been addressed in the videotape to allow students time to write their own answers.

4. After the tape is over, review the viewing guide with your students, paying close attention to the last question asked in each segment. (Answers are provided on page 10.) Have students compare and contrast how the people in "Citizen Stories" view responsibilities in a democracy. Compare what the five people featured in "Citizen Stories" would say it means to be a responsible citizen with the list your students created in Activity 1. Are there similarities? Differences?

5. Conclude by asking your students which person in "Citizen Stories" they think serves as the best example of a responsible citizen. Why?

Answers to Student Handout 3: Viewing Guide

Brotherly Love

1. He saw homeless people on television and could not believe that people were living like that in his city. He begged his father to take him out to help someone.
2. A home for the homeless.
3. Eighty-three percent of the people who pass through Trevor's Place go on to find permanent housing.
4. Students' answers will vary.

This Land Is Your Land

1. A citizen's organization dedicated to protecting the environment.
2. When the public is aware and concerned about a particular issue, the politicians will follow by creating laws and regulations that will resolve that issue.
3. Yes.
4. Students' answers will vary.

And Justice for All

1. Pro bono means "free of charge"; it refers to services given free to those who cannot afford them.
2. To be with their mother, who was living in the United States.
3. Yes.
4. Students' answers will vary.

Street Smart

1. By building a student-operated shopping mall in a school in an at-risk neighborhood in Washington, D.C.
2. He enlisted them to train the students who would be running the shops in the mall.
3. He believes that the mall will help students gain respect for themselves and for others, learn a sense of loyalty to the community, and develop a set of values or standards that will lead them to help those in need.
4. Students' answers will vary.

Citizen Nader

1. A movement started by Nader in the mid-1960s that involves citizen activists across the country demanding civic and corporate accountability and responsibility.
2. The auto industry (safer cars), public health, food additives, industrial pollution, congressional reform, worker and product safety, clean air and water, and the inner workings of government and corporations.
3. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration.
4. Students' answers will vary.

Additional Suggestions

1. Have students clip articles from newspapers and magazines about people who are involved in their communities. Divide students into groups of two or three. Have each group contact one of these people to interview. Interview questions may include:

- Why did you decide to get involved?
- How did you get involved?
- Did other people help you? If so, who?
- Did you have any opposition? If so, who or what?
- How have your efforts affected the community?

Each group should present its interview to the rest of the class. If possible, the interviews could appear as part of an article in the school newspaper. Students may also ask the people they interviewed to speak to the class about civic involvement.

2. As you view "Citizen Stories," you will notice that the five protagonists bring up themes. These themes include risks involved in affecting social change, the role of politicians in social change, affecting social change versus simply helping out, the role of an individual in a democracy, the effect one person can have on his or her community, and the opposition one may encounter when affecting social change. Write some of these themes on the board, and discuss them with the students before viewing the tape. After watching the video, have students comment on the themes. You may wish to preview the tape to pull out your own themes or use the ones mentioned above.

3. Divide the students into five groups. Assign each group one of the "citizens" in the videotape: Trevor Ferrell, Cindy Rank, Lilia Velasquez, William Warner Johnson, or Ralph Nader. As the students view "Citizen Stories," have each group listen for a quotation from their citizen that directly relates to responsible citizenship. Tell the students that the entire class will discuss the videotape, so they need to be familiar with all of the stories. After viewing the videotape, give each group five to ten minutes to decide on one quotation from their citizen and discuss what it says about citizenship. Then, bring the students back together. Have a spokesperson from each group present their quotation to the rest of the class and explain what it says about civic participation. These quotations can be good discussion starters. Be sure to have other students comment on each group's response.

Activity 4
Community Service

Objectives

After completing the activity, students should be able to:

1. Discuss and understand the meaning of service.
2. Identify needs in their community.
3. Discuss possible actions that they, as students, can take to address concerns in their community.

Procedure

1. After students have viewed "Citizen Stories," write this quotation from the opening of the videotape on the board:

That my country be served is the first wish of my heart, I should be doubly happy indeed, were I to render it a service.

–Thomas Jefferson

Ask students what they think Jefferson meant when he spoke these words. What did he mean by "service"? What does it mean to be involved? Ask students to define "community service" and give examples. Examples may include volunteering at a soup kitchen, donating money to a local charity, voting, or working on a political campaign.

2. Next, have students identify needs in their community. List all of the responses on the board. Students should be specific. For example, if a student responds that education is a problem, ask the student to define what is wrong with education. His or her answer may include underpaid teachers, an increasing high school dropout rate, or overcrowded classrooms.

Then, break students into groups of five or six. Have each group choose their most pressing concern to discuss (if a group cannot come to a consensus, they should vote on their most pressing concern). Next, give each student a copy of **Student Handout 4: What Can I Do?** and review it with the class. Have students pick a leader of the group to facilitate discussion of the questions, and report the group's answers to the rest of the class. By completing this handout, students should devise a plan to address a specific problem in their community.

Note: Students may need time to go to the library to do additional research.

3. After each group has had time to complete the handout and discuss possible solutions to their community concern, bring the students back together in the large group to present their ideas. After each group presents its ideas, have students answer the following questions:

- How effective is this solution?
- By using this solution, will people meet any obstacles? If so, what are these obstacles?
- What other suggestions do you have for this solution?
- What other choices does this group have to address this concern?

4. Urge students to initiate their solution. You may wish to give extra credit for those students who put their plan into action.

Additional Suggestions

1. Have students cut articles from newspapers and magazines identifying local concerns and ways people are addressing them. Display these articles on a bulletin board for all students to read. Ask them the following questions:

- What types of concerns do people in the community have?
- How are people addressing these concerns?
- Do you think these "solutions" are effective? Why or why not?

2. Have students conduct a survey in their school or community regarding community service and citizenship. Some questions may include:

- What is the biggest problem facing the community?
- Who is responsible for addressing this problem? The people? The local government? The state government? The national government? Others?
- What is a possible solution to this problem?

After conducting the survey, students should present their findings to the entire class. Have the students discuss the results, and ask them the following questions:

- What do people think is the most pressing need in their community today? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What are some possible solutions to these problems? Which one do you think is most effective? Why?

3. Mandatory service as a requirement for high school graduation is a controversial topic in many schools across the country. Ask the students what they know or have heard about the issue. You may want to obtain a copy of the national service bill by calling or writing your representative or senator. Post the bill on the board for all students to see. Break the students into groups of five or six to discuss the pros and cons of the bill. Then, bring students back together as a class and have one student from each group report on his or her group's discussion.

Student Handout 1

Civic Responsibilities

Our responsibilities as Americans range from simple to complex actions. Some actions are duties, some are laws, and some are strictly voluntary. First, read through the entire list of civic actions below—several times if necessary—and then rank them from 1 to 12, giving a 1 to the action you think is most important and a 12 to the one you think is least important. Remember, there are no "right" or "wrong" responses in this exercise. Call them the way you see them!

_____ protesting unfair laws

_____ voting

_____ giving money to the United Way

_____ defending your country

_____ paying your federal income taxes

_____ expressing opinions to your elected officials

_____ taking a shower

_____ serving on a jury

_____ running for public office

_____ graduating from high school

_____ obeying the law

_____ volunteering at a soup kitchen

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Student Handout 2

Social Movements in United States History

As a research project, choose a social movement in the United States in which citizens worked together to change American society. Answer the following questions as you research:

1. Which social movement did you choose? Describe the movement.

2. What were the events that led to the movement?

3. Who were some of the leaders of this movement?

4. How did the leaders get started in the movement?

5. What opposition did people in the movement face? How did they handle this opposition?

6. What were the results of the movement?

7. What lasting effects did this movement have on American society?

8. Would you join this movement if it were happening today? Why or why not?

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Student Handout 3
Viewing Guide

As you watch the videotape "Citizen Stories: Democracy and Responsibility in American Life," complete this handout by answering the questions in the space provided.

Brotherly Love

Trevor Ferrell is a 17-year-old student in Philadelphia.

1. How did Trevor Ferrell get involved with helping the homeless?

2. What is Trevor's Place?

3. What does Trevor say about the success rate of his Campaign for the Homeless?

4. How would Trevor Ferrell describe what it means to be a responsible citizen?

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This Land Is Your Land

Cindy Rank is a part-time health care worker and a member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy.

1. What is the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy?

2. How does Cindy Rank describe the relationship between politicians and the public?

3. Was Cindy Rank's group able to stop the mining project?

4. How would Cindy Rank describe what it means to be a responsible citizen?

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And Justice for All

Lilia Velasquez is a lawyer in San Diego, California.

1. What is pro bono work?

2. Why did Juan and Jorge Lopez come to the United States illegally?

3. Was Lilia Velasquez successful in her effort to allow Juan and Jorge to stay in the United States?

4. How would Lilia Velasquez describe what it means to be a responsible citizen?

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Street Smart

William Warner Johnson is a police officer in Washington, D.C.

1. How did Officer Johnson create a "positive force" in his community?

2. How did Officer Johnson involve the community's business leaders in his project?

3. What does Officer Johnson believe the Connor-Harris Mini Mall teaches young people?

4. How would Officer Johnson describe what it means to be a responsible citizen?

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Citizen Nader

Ralph Nader is a lawyer and nationally recognized consumer advocate.

1. What is the consumer movement?

2. List some of the issues in which Ralph Nader has been involved.

3. What government agencies have been created as a result of Ralph Nader's efforts?

4. How would Ralph Nader describe what it means to be a responsible citizen?

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Student Handout 4
What Can I Do?

1. What is the most pressing concern in your community? Be specific.

2. Where can you get more information about this concern? List possibilities below. After listing possible sources, locate these sources and use them to find out more about your concern.

3. Who can help you address your concern? List names, addresses, and phone numbers of people and organizations that could assist you. After generating the list, contact these people and organizations to find out how they could help.

Name	Address	Phone Number

4. After learning more about your community's most pressing concern, what are some possible solutions to this problem?

5. Which solution seems best? Why?

6. What steps will you take to put your solution into action?

7. What additional resources will you need? Where and from whom can you get additional support?

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